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appelait cette belle-fille son petit lingot d'or."² (*Mém.* Ed. Boislisle, XIV, pp. 362 f.

Saint-Simon tells us later that this marriage was to become for Crozat "le repentir et la douleur de tout le reste de sa vie." Surely Bettina did wisely in preferring to her princely suitors the lieutenant of artillery. France possesses a lasting souvenir of "le petit lingot d'or," for the residence of the president of the republic, the Palais de l'Elysée, was built in 1718 for the comte d'Evreux, and largely with the dowry of his bride.

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Kaum ein Hauch: A REPLY

Criticism is justifiable only in so far as it is implicitly or explicitly constructive. An article in the November Journal entitled "The Immortality of Examination Pests" sins against both these canons. Besides, it is in poor taste: like the title of my reply.

First of all, it surely is not the special competence of a New Jerseyite to criticize the educational system of a neighboring state. What, legitimately, may he be expected to know about it? In the second place, it is the easiest thing in the world to pick flaws, just as it is the most difficult thing in the world to turn out a flawless piece of work.

It may interest the readers of the Journal to know how the New York State examinations are controlled. They are formulated by committees of specialists, representing (1) the State Department of Education, (2) the High Schools, (3) the Colleges. The best teachers in the State are, in rotation, selected by the State Examinations Board to serve on the various committees. If an examination is faulty, the defect is inseparable from defects in human nature and the nature of examinations *per se*. The very men who are most prone to criticize these examinations prove to be just as vulnerable, when appointed to our committees, as their predecessors. Indeed, the principal of one of our largest and best high schools recently told me that he would gladly give me over his signature a statement that "heads of departments in his school had, in conjunction with their teachers, been guilty of making worse local examinations than any state-wide examinations ever perpetrated by the Regents' committees."

An examination must be judged as a whole; and the system by its general average of achievement. We should not think of condemning the beauty of a face, which was marred only by eyes

² Cf. Littré, *Dictionnaire*, s. v.

that were a trifle too small, or by ears a trifle too large, or by a nose just a bit too *retroussé*. Nor would we condemn a building merely because a window was broken, or the façade chipped. Yet critics will blithely condemn not merely an examination but an entire examination system for similar defects. It might be well to give such critics a little of their own medicine, perhaps in the following doses:—

(1) "Eines Mannes Rede ist keines Mannes Rede; Man soll sie billig horen Beede." Goethe's words are just as true now as they were when he wrote them. Some one has said that there are always *three* sides to every question: your side, my side, and the right side. Matters of opinion are hardly susceptible of proof; they must be solved by compromise. Yet it never seems to enter the head of some critics that they might possibly be wrong.

(2) A state-wide examination must really test the work done, as prescribed by the syllabus, and must, at the same time, please as many varied (and, at times, conflicting) groups of teachers as possible. The New York State Examinations in modern languages are the most representative examinations on earth. They constantly reflect the opinions and aims and ideals of the teachers of the State, who are organized not only in a State Modern Language Association furnishing more subscribers to the Journal than any other State in the Union, but also into ten branch associations meeting each twice a year for discussion and mutual helpfulness. Besides, the two largest cities of the State have a standing committee each, acting as a clearing house for criticisms and complaints and constructive suggestions: a sort of *liaison* body, connecting the State Department with the teachers.

(3) The mere mechanics of examination making are sometimes responsible for the character of an examination, assailed by some critic who knows nothing about the matter. We should like nothing better than to have all our questions 'direct method' questions, but anyone who has ever tried to make such a paper alone knows how difficult and well-nigh impossible it is. We should prefer to have only the simplest topics for free composition, but the number of such topics is very limited and they can not be repeated *ad infinitum*, without risking the certainty of "canned" French, German and Spanish in the answer papers.

And, by the way, why Mr. Hauch's hatred of free composition? At our recent State M. L. A. meeting at Rochester, one of the ablest college teachers of French in the State spoke favorably of "free composition" as the best possible type of written exercise; and his words met with the hearty approval of about a hundred representative teachers. Also, a committee of seven of the best teachers of French of New York City recently went on record as heartily in favor of requiring *all* pupils to take the translation passage into English, the translation passage from English into

the foreign language, *and the free composition*. Surely Mr. Hauch is too absolute in denying these teachers representation in examinations made for them in New York State, and not at all for him, in New Jersey.

(4) Mr. Hauch's diatribe against proverbs contains more witticism than truth. Pupils *can* explain, in simple language, such a proverb as *Mas vale tarde que nunca*, because they *have* done so: as applicable (1) when one *comes* late to an appointment, (2) when one finally *does* something, or (3) when one finally *gives up* some habit. That type of question is familiar to all who use the direct method, and is especially applicable to Spanish with its uncommon wealth of proverbs. We frequently vary the question by asking the pupils to invent a story ending appropriately with such a proverb. It is utterly inconsequent to compare such a proverb with "An Indian leaning against a tree." Proverbs are the crystallized wisdom of the race, as witness Kipling's "Gods of the Copybook Maxims," which, by the way, and in conclusion, I recommend to Mr. Hauch.

WILLIAM R. PRICE